

WO-336  
Edwin L. Purnell Store  
Ocean City  
Private

c. 1898

The old Edwin L. Purnell store is a distinctive commercial building that survives from the early period of Ocean City history. Built around 1898, the two-and-a-half story frame store is distinguished by a steeply pitched hip roof that is extended with a two-story porch that encircles three sides of the main block. Notable as well is the exterior sheathing of fish-scale shingles on the second floor and within in the rooftop cross gables. Few turn of the twentieth century commercial buildings survive in the old part of Ocean City, and, despite alterations on the first floor, the building retains a large degree of integrity. Similar to much of the city's early commercial architecture, the rectangular hip roofed main block was simply enhanced with a two-story turned post porch and an exterior layer of fish-scale shingles.

A chain of title for this property reveals the corner lot was the site of the Edwin L. Purnell store during much of the twentieth century. The extant store was evidently erected during the ownership of Edwin L. Purnell, which began in May 1897. The Sanborn Insurance map printed in the same year indicates the lot was unimproved at the time. The architectural features of the building suggest it was erected shortly afterwards. Located on "Lot 49" as designated on the original plat of Ocean City, the lot transferred initially for \$200. The store property was held by Purnell family interests until 1969.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: Edwin L. Purnell Store

MHT Inventory Number: WO-336

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

1) Historic Period Theme(s):

ARCHITECTURE  
COMMERCE

2) Geographic Orientation:

EASTERN SHORE

3) Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

INDUSTRIAL/URBAN DOMINANCE  
(1870-1930)

4) Resource Type(s):

STANDING STRUCTURE  
1. STORE

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WO-336

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic EDWIN L. PURNELL STORE

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number Corner of Talbot Street and Baltimore Ave. ☐ not for publication

city, town Ocean City ☐ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Worcester

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name P. L. Sethi

street & number 209 South Baltimore Ave. telephone no.: 289-5687

city, town Ocean City state and zip code MD 21842

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Clerk of Court liber 1258

street & number Worcester County Courthouse folio 177

city, town Snow Hill state MD 21863

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. WO-336

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The old Edwin L. Purnell store stands on the southeast corner of the intersection of Baltimore Avenue and Talbot Street in the heart of Ocean City, Worcester County, Maryland. The two-and-a-half story, three-bay frame structure faces west with the hip roof oriented on a north/south axis.

Built around 1898, the two-and-a-half story commercial building rests on a minimal brick foundation, and it is covered by a steeply pitched asbestos shingle hip roof. Extending around the building and fronting the two street elevations as well as the east side is a two-story porch.

The west (main) elevation is oriented to Baltimore Avenue. Sheltered by the two-story porch is a series of commercial fronts with recessed entrances and large display windows. Tapered columns support the second floor porch, while original turned posts remain on the second floor to support the roof. A turned baluster handrail stretches between the porch posts. The second floor wall is marked by a center door flanked by two-over-two sash windows. Fish-scale shingles cover the wall surface. Distinguishing the roof is a cross gable with a two-over-two sash window surrounded by a field of fish-scale shingles.

The first floor on the north side of the building is infilled with later alterations, but the second floor remains an open porch with turned posts. Paired two-over-two sash windows are flanked by single two-over-two sash. Centered on the north slope of hip roof is another cross gable filled with a one-over-one sash window.

The two-story porch extends around to the east side as well, and the exterior is finished in a similar manner. Rising through the center of building on the east side is a narrow brick stove chimney.

The interior was not seen.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. W0-336

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The old Edwin L. Purnell store is a distinctive commercial building that survives from the early period of Ocean City history. Built around 1898, the two-and-a-half story frame store is distinguished by a steeply pitched hip roof that is extended with a two-story porch that encircles three sides of the main block. Notable as well is the exterior sheathing of fish-scale shingles on the second floor and within the rooftop cross gables. Few turn of the twentieth century commercial buildings survive in the old part of Ocean City, and, despite alterations on the first floor, the building retains a large degree of integrity. Similar to much of the city's early architecture, the rectangular hip roofed main block was simply enhanced with a two-story turned post porch and an exterior layer of fish-scale shingles.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT

A chain of title for this property reveals the corner lot was the site of the Edwin L. Purnell store during the much of the twentieth century. The extant store was evidently erected during the ownership of Edwin L. Purnell, which began in May 1897. The Sanborn Insurance map printed in the same year indicates the lot was unimproved at the time. The architectural features of the building suggest it was erected shortly afterwards. Located on "Lot 49" as designated on the original plat of Ocean City, the lot transferred initially for \$200.(FHP 9/407) The store property was held by Purnell family interests until 1969.(FWH 248/257)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. W0-336

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Paul B. Touart	Architectural Historian
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organization	Worcester County	date	3/14/90
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street & number	Worcester County Courthouse	telephone	301-632-1194
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city or town	Snow Hill	state	MD 21863
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The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

WO-336  
EDWIN L. PURNELL STORE  
Ocean City, Maryland  
Chain of title

WCL 1258/177                      Parstotan Ial Sethi, Ramesh Sethi,  
   Sushil Kumar

to

12/12/1986                      Parstotan Ial Sethi, Remesh Sethi  
   northerly part of lot 49

FWH 742/197                      Fay Y. Kramer

to

12/31/1980                      Parstotan Ial Sethi, et al. as above

FWH 248/257                      Josephine Campbell Purnell  
   widow of Edwin L. Purnell

to

3/21/1969                      Fay Y. Kramer  
   Northerly part of lot 49

JEB 9/106                      Irma K. Mumford

to

4/23/1941                      Edwin L. Purnell, Josephine C. his wife  
   1. JEB 9/106 Irma K. Mumford to Edwin L.  
   Purnell (Northerly part Lot 49)  
   2. ODC 49/308 March 7, 1924 Edwin L.  
   Purnell to John E. Lynch (a portion of  
   lot 49)

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EDWIN L. PURNELL STORE  
Ocean City, Maryland  
Chain of title continued

3. ODC 16/494, June 18, 1914 Edwin L.  
Purnell to John E. Lynch  $\frac{1}{2}$  lot 49

4. FHP 9/407, May 18, 1897 Jacob M.  
Holloway to Edwin L. Purnell "Lot 49"  
\$200

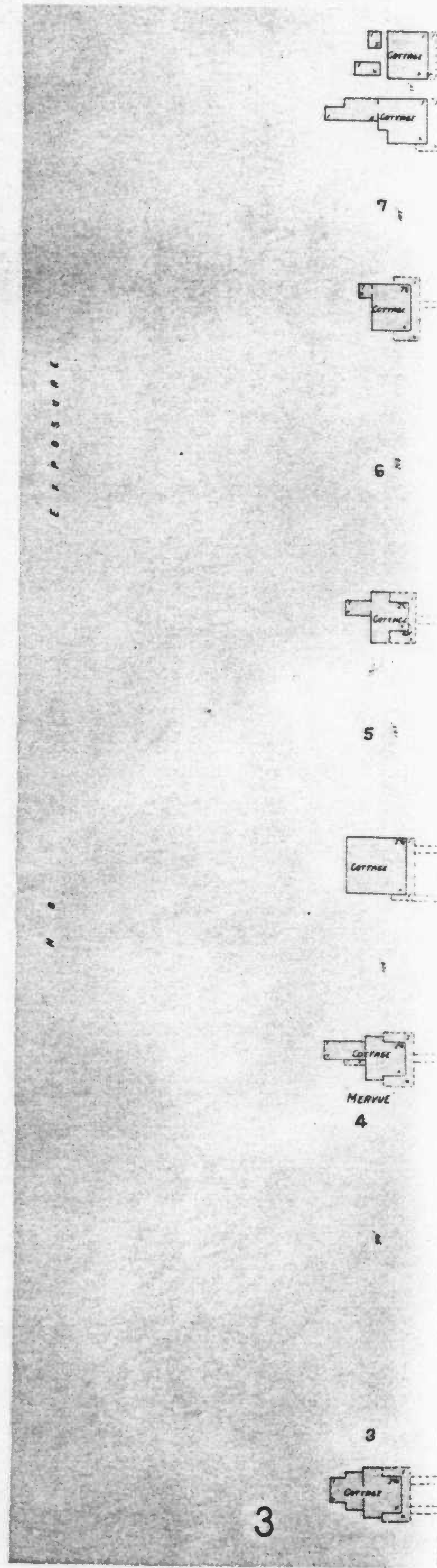
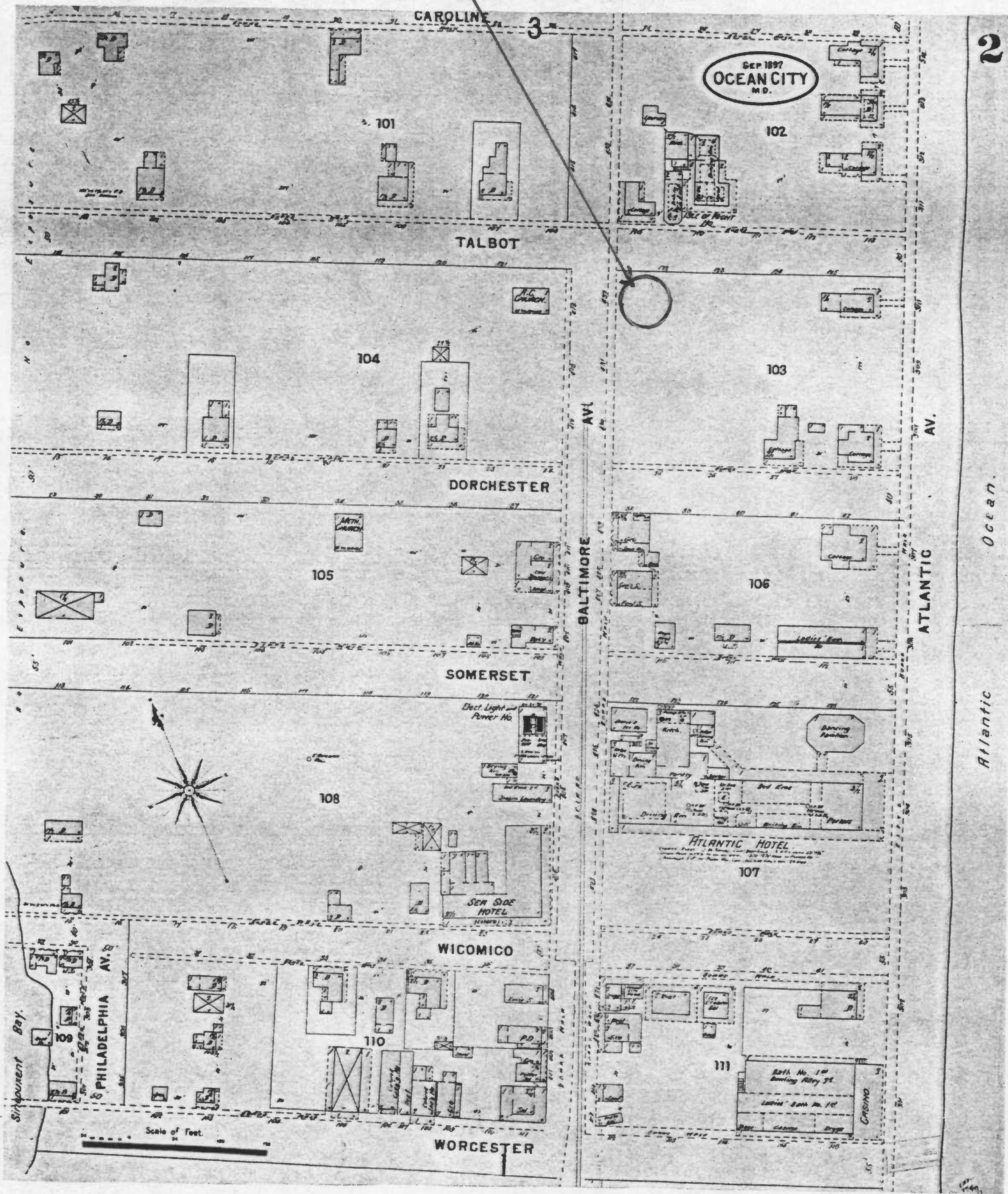
5. Baldwin F. ....? Collector of Taxes  
to Jacob M. Holloway FHP 7/419 4/24/1896

6. Orphans Court Proceedings, estate of  
Peter L. Davis, deceased September 1899

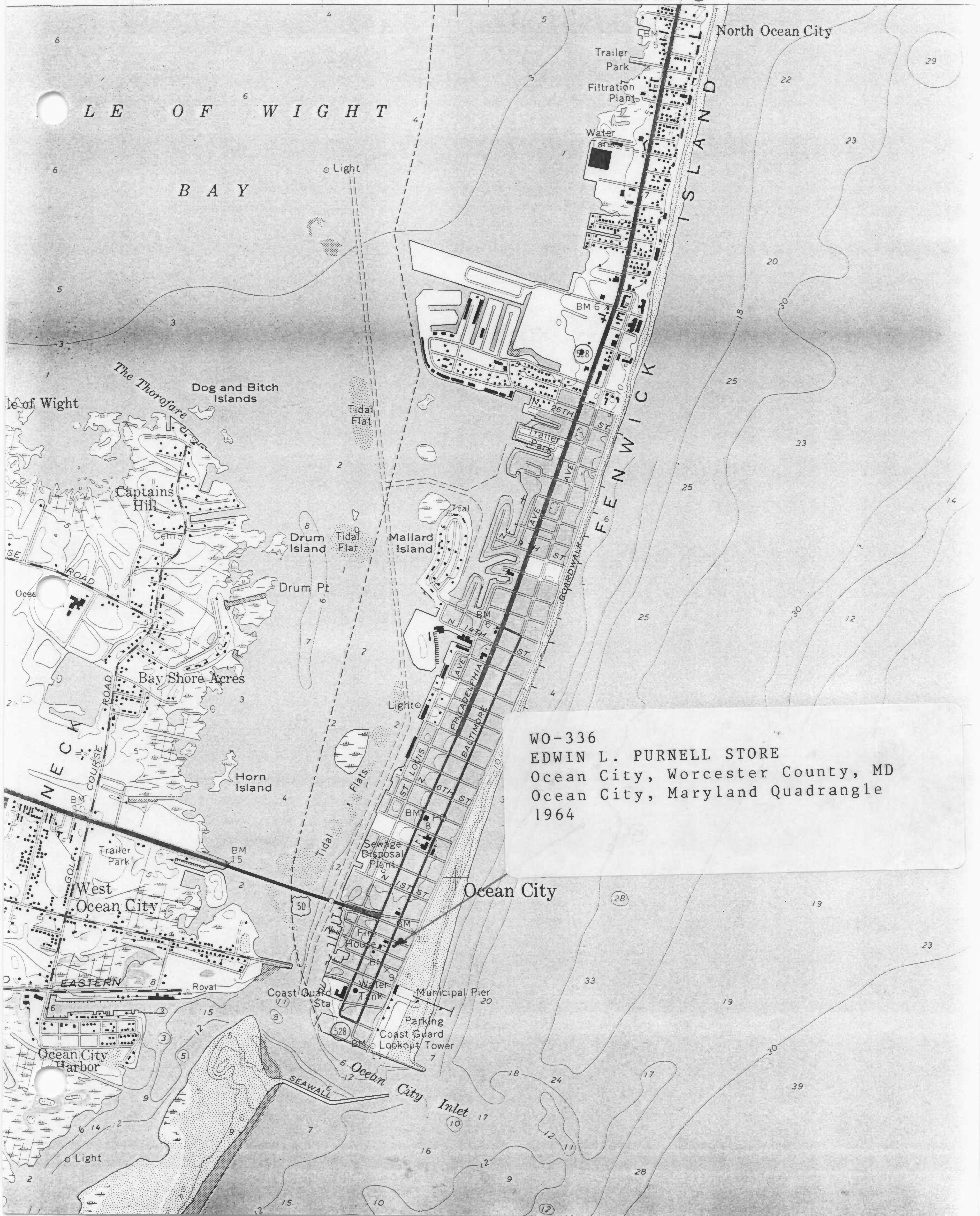
7. ITM 6/394 Hillary R. Pitts, et al. to  
Peter L. Davis, January 19, 1878



SITE OF NO-336, EDWIN L. PURNELL STORE







WO-336  
EDWIN L. PURNELL STORE  
Ocean City, Worcester County, MD  
Ocean City, Maryland Quadrangle  
1964